

Remarks

Claims 1-4 are pending in the present application.

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Moronaga et al. (US 5,229,864), hereafter "Moronaga," in view of Yamada (US 5,953,461). Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Moronaga and Yamada in view of Jung (US 5,732,159). Claims 3-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) over Moronaga and Yamada in view of Nakaya (US 6,295,376). These rejections are defective because Moronaga, Yamada, Jung, and Nakaya, taken alone or in any combination, fail to teach or suggest each and every feature of the claims as required by 35 U.S.C. and 103(a).

Regarding claim 1, none of the references cited by the Examiner teach or suggest, among other features, a determination step for "determining a correction area around block boundaries, said determination step including computing mask values associated with the input samples using the filtered samples, said correction area corresponding to an area where the mask values are different from zero."

In the Office Action, the Examiner alleges that the claimed step of "computing mask values" is disclosed in column 11, lines 21-23 of Moronaga. This is incorrect. On the contrary, the cited section of Moronaga is completely silent with regard to the **computing of mask values** associated with the input samples. Further, the cited section of Moronaga is completely silent with regard to the **computing of mask values** associated with the input samples **using filtered samples obtained by filtering an input signal**. Although these points were previously presented by Applicant in the After-Final response filed on March 9, 2005, the Examiner has yet to respond to Applicant's arguments.

The Examiner further alleges that the claimed "correction area corresponding to an area where the mask values are different from zero" is disclosed in column 4, lines 11-16 of Moronaga. This is also incorrect. First, this cited section of Moronaga refers to a first embodiment of Moronaga's image signal regenerating device, while the previously cited section of Moronaga refer to another, different embodiment of Moronaga's image signal regenerating device. Thus, the Examiner has indiscriminately combined, without any supporting rationale, features from different embodiments of Moronaga's image signal regenerating device. Regardless, the section in Moronaga cited by the Examiner (column 4, lines 11-16) is completely silent with regard to a correction area corresponding to an "area where the mask values are different from zero" as set forth in claim 1 of the present patent application.

The Examiner asserts that Moronaga "does not disclose expressly that the mask values associated with the input samples are computed using the filtered samples." To overcome this deficiency of Moronaga, the Examiner relies on the teachings of Yamada. In particular, the Examiner states that "Yamada discloses using a low pass filter (figure 1(11) of Yamada) to obtain filtered values (figure 1(Sus) and column 11, lines 53-59 of Yamada) which are then used to compute mask values (Sorg-Sus) associated with the input samples (Sorg)." Applicant disagrees and submits that since Moronaga does not disclose mask values, there is absolutely no motivation for combining Moronaga and Yamada in the manner suggested by the Examiner.

If the Examiner believes that anything further is necessary to place the application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below.

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Respectfully submitted,



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